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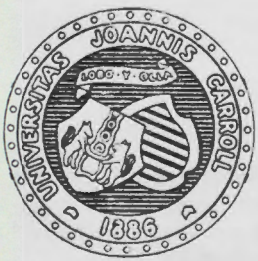
UNIVERSITAS JOANNIS CARROLL
1886

# Contents

# The Pen Is Mightier

by John Kenny

LLEWELLYN HIGGINS sat hunched over his typewriter, his face sober with concentration. His landlady allowed no typing after ten o'clock in the evening, and he was hurrying to finish. Suddenly he straightened and began to type rapidly, his expression changing to exaltation as he worked.

> Hank Power tossed down his fourth shot of bourbon and, with a backhand sweep, skidded his shotglass down the bar so that it came to rest before the bartender. He turned to the luscious creature next to him.
>
> "Sylvia, now that Clint Wilson's up the river and your old man's cleared of the murder rap, you don't need me anymore."
>
> Her voice was husky and pleading. "But Hank! You said you loved me!"
>
> He laughed softly as he took her hand and gave it one last squeeze. "That's right, baby; I love all my clients. That's what makes my job interesting. See you around."
>
> He walked back into the street and turned up his collar against the chill of the big city. Flicking his cigarette into the gutter, he strode off into the neon jungle that was home.

Llewellyn rose and stretched himself to his full five feet, four inches. At twenty-seven, quietly dressed and slightly bald, he was the picture of respectability. If he had introduced himself to one of his readers as Flint Masters, creator of Hank Power, he would have been flatly disbelieved. But then, he had not the slightest intention of so introducing himself; the last thing he wanted was to be revealed as the lion of the paperback mystery writers. Llewellyn's modesty was understandable. Writing fleshy stories, he had decided, was not quite respectable; and Llewellyn lived in a respectable house, he worked as a cashier in a respectable bank, and he had a respectable mother living in the sub-

urbs. As a matter of fact, Llewellyn's mother was militantly respectable, and the thought of earning her disapproval terrorized him.

The next day, during his lunch hour, Llewellyn called upon his publisher to deliver the new manuscript, *The Neon Jungle*, and to pick up his mail. After work, he hurried home to read the letters in privacy. The letters addressed to Flint Masters never failed to delight him. Only his readers knew him for the man he secretly felt he could be.

Tonight there was a letter which interested him greatly. It was typewritten and unsigned; the return address was a box number at a nearby post-office. The content, however, was what stimulated his interest.

> Dear Mr. Masters:
>
> I just finished reading *Kill Me Tenderly* and simply had to tell you how much I enjoyed it. What we need in this day and age is men like Hank Power, men who know how to put a woman in her place. Believe me, a woman has a hard time being feminine around the weak-kneed men you meet nowadays, and it's a pleasure to find out that someone still knows how men should act. I cannot help thinking that you are very much like Hank Power.
>
> An Admirer

Llewellyn knew instantly what sort of woman she was: she was tall, blond, and well-proportioned — like Sylvia, his latest heroine. All Llewellyn's heroines were tall, blond, and well-proportioned. This, however, was the first such woman ever to take a personal interest in him, and he wondered how he might sustain the relationship. He decided that the truth was safest; so wrote back admitting that, despite his knowledge of the world, he lived a rather ordinary life. He said that he, too, was interested in the declining virility of modern men and had begun writing in hopes that his stories would do something to reestablish male prestige.

The correspondence lasted about two months. During that time Llewellyn and his "Admirer" discussed the changing positions of male and female in modern society. "Dear Mr. Masters" had changed to "Dear Flint," and Llewellyn had once, in a moment of boldness, requested the woman's

name. She had replied that she had no hopes of winning his affection as a flesh-and-blood woman and that her name was of no importance. Llewellyn had taken this as a feminine dodge and would have continued writing if he had not, quite suddenly, found romance elsewhere.

Her name was Gladys. She was short and powerfully built, with a commanding, somewhat raspy voice; she was also the most efficient secretary that the Continental National had ever employed. She had worked at the bank for a month before Llewellyn even spoke to her. One day, she was walking by his window when she stopped short and stared at him. "Your necktie is crooked," she proclaimed—a little too loudly perhaps, for Llewellyn flinched visibly. She lowered her voice a few decibels. "Here, let me straighten it for you."

Llewellyn, to his embarrassment, was required to lean over the counter while she performed this service. But, as her capable fingers fussed with his tie, he became strangely pleased and excited. He noted her sturdy bosom and solid body. Here was a woman to be relied upon. "Thank you, Miss Carson," he said, blushing slightly, as she stepped back to appraise her work.

She smiled maternally. "My name is Gladys," she replied, and to Llewellyn her voice was soft and warm. "Thank you, Gladys," he said under his breath as she bustled away. "Gladys," he said again. The name was like exotic music.

That night Llewellyn found that his standards of feminine beauty had been revised to include short, firm-bodied women who straightened men's neckties. He wondered what Gladys thought of him and considered his assets. He did not drink, and he seldom used bad language—except, of course, when he felt it was expected of him, and even then he did not enjoy it; he never dressed loudly, and everyone thought well of him at the bank. He concluded that she might consider him eligible provided that he kept his literary activities to himself. He began to invent situations in which he boldly won her approval. "So you think I'm an ordinary bank cashier, do you?" he said aloud, gazing at her with an amused, contemptuous expression. Then he told her the dramatic truth about himself, that he was a government agent, living in

constant danger. Later, as he fell asleep, he was apprehending a bank robber before her rapturous eyes.

Apparently Gladys did consider Llewellyn eligible, for she began, at every opportunity, to do small favors for him. A scant six weeks elapsed before Llewellyn invited her to have lunch with him.

Courtship was rapid and comparatively unruffled. They would go to the movies; she would fix dinner for them at his place; and he would take her home. The only real snag had occurred when he drove her out to meet his mother. The two women had disliked each other instinctively. Behind a facade of polite conversation, they had eyed each other like two bulldogs vying for a bone, although Llewellyn could not imagine why. A week later, his mother tried to discourage the relationship; but true love won out, and Gladys led him to the altar.

The couple settled down in Llewellyn's apartment, and Gladys took up housekeeping with the same efficiency she had displayed at the bank. Marriage, Llewellyn decided, was a comfortable situation. He no longer had to take his laundry to Mother's every weekend; he no longer had to eat frankfurters and beans for supper; and he found it pleasant to have someone pick up after him.

Gladys, too, seemed content. They found that they agreed on many things. For instance, when Gladys said that the *Saturday Evening Post* was a nice family magazine, Llewellyn said yes, he thought so too, and took out a subscription. When Gladys decided that Llewellyn looked better in brown, he instantly perceived that she was right and stopped wearing his grey suit. And when Gladys mentioned that smoking was a dirty habit, Llewellyn said that it was also unhealthy and threw out his pipe.

Llewellyn, then, was all the more puzzled when, six months after their marriage, a rift began to form between Gladys and himself. Her conversation became curt, and, at times, she seemed to be looking at him with disgust. He sensed that somehow, to her mind at least, he was failing her.

The situation came to a head one night over an insignificant matter. During dinner, the telephone rang, and

Llewellyn answered. It was a storm-window salesman, an obstinate fellow, and it took forty-five minutes to convince him that Llewellyn had no need of storm windows.

Gladys was visibly angry when Llewellyn returned to the table. "Who was that?" she asked.

"A very nice man who wondered if I wanted to buy storm windows," Llewellyn replied with a touch of indignation in his voice.

"And you took forty-five minutes to tell him that you lived in an apartment!"

"Well, I had to be polite," he said, subdued.

She snorted and left the table.

Domestic strife was not the only thing troubling Llewellyn. According to the contract he had made with his publisher, his next story was overdue, and, as yet, he had found no way of continuing his writing without Gladys knowing about it. He had been afraid to pick up his mail for some time now; but, after the storm-window episode, his spirits were so low that he could put it off no longer. He managed to get the mail without being reprimanded, and, much relieved, he skipped his lunch and went to the public library to read his letters.

The first letter he spotted was from his old "Admirer," and was postmarked two days ago. He ripped it open and read it gluttonously. It seemed that his friend had married the very sort of man she had complained about, and she wanted his advice; perhaps he could talk to her husband. Llewellyn swelled with pride; here was a woman who appreciated him. Despite the satisfaction the letter gave him, though, he felt that it would not be proper to answer it. Nor would it be safe; if Gladys ever found out, she would be furious.

He went home that night more cheerful than he had been for weeks. He even managed to catch the early bus, the first time he had done so since his marriage. When he entered the apartment, Gladys was reading. She looked startled and tried to put the book out of sight. She was too slow. Llewellyn saw it and recognized it immediately; it was one of his own stories, *A Bullet for Blondie.* "I didn't know you liked that

sort of thing," he said, puzzled and somewhat uneasy.

Gladys looked defensive for the first time since he had known her. "It's not a trashy novel like you think," she said. "I used to know Flint Masters very well, and he's an intelligent man, interested in social problems."

He was about to suggest that perhaps she had confused Flint Masters with someone else when the truth crept over him. It took a long moment to reconcile the picture he had of his "Admirer" with the reality of Gladys, but when he had done so, Llewellyn's creative powers came to the fore. He reflected a moment. He knew what form his revelation would take; it needed just a bit more drama. What would Hank Power do? Suddenly he knew.

He strode to the pantry and searched frantically for the rum that Gladys used in her pudding. At last he found it and, snatching a glass from the shelf, he returned to the parlor. It was not bourbon but it would have to do.

He leaned casually against the doorjamb and poured himself a huge drink. Gladys stared open-mouthed as though he had suddenly lost his wits. He smiled patronizingly, basking in her astonishment, and then tossed down the rum. For a moment he looked as though he had swallowed a live coal, but he recovered his aplomb beautifully. "So you think I'm an ordinary bank cashier, do you?" he began, the alcohol warming him to his ears.

# *contemplation*

tide's roll an incessant rhythm
on bleached sands and little
drivels of driftwood —

even here, where wild winds
lash my face,
even here —
the image of you i know separates
from reality.

now that death walked bare-footed
on grief's steep slopes,
i remember clearly
(wish i had forgot.)

here the water surges in turmoil
from deep,
deep in my heart yearns in endless
gasps of despair
to hold on forever —

but the water beckons and calls,
draws a faint hope in sinking
beneath its folds.

— *Anton Peter*

# On the Emergence of Spanish Literature

by Robert Corrigan, Ph.D.

SEVERAL YEARS ago a colleague observed that the only figures of literary merit to come out of Spain were Cervantes and Spinoza. At the time the remark was dismissed with an indulgent smile because, after all, Spinoza was a Dutchman. Nevertheless, the incident emphasizes an attitude which, unfortunately, tends to reduce almost everything in Hispanic culture to *toros, tortillas, sombreros, siestas, rumbas,* and *revoluciones.*

Perhaps Spanish teachers themselves have contributed to this opinion. Frequently finding themselves in a defensive position because of ill-informed counselors or advisers in other disciplines, they often attempt to counteract the situation by over-emphasizing the practical and commerical asects of their field. Some stress the fact that their tongue is one of the world's five most widely spoken, or that in little more than a generation from now the population of Latin America will have doubled that of Anglo-America. On the other hand, many cite the impressive volume of trade we have with our Spanish-speaking neighbors and accentuate the financial advantages of the language they teach.

Unhappily, those who have insisted upon these vocational aspects of the language have done almost as great a disservice to their calling as the former group. Learning a second tongue and studying about its cultural patterns is one of the most enriching experiences a student can enjoy.

But let us return to the original point—the allegation

that Spanish literature in "inferior." One factor which has contributed to this notion is the Spaniard's fierce individualism, a trait which has rendered him rather helpless in the area of public relations. Angel Ganivet seems to have hit upon an important observation when he said that his countrymen have been "lenders" much more often than "bankers" in the world literary market. Perhaps we should recall some examples which he must have had in mind.

Among Europe's primitive poets none is more captivating than Juan Ruiz, Spain's "Friar Tuck." This clever humorist — the Iberian counterpart of Chaucer, Rabelais and Boccaccio — has left us a magnificent picture of life during the Middle Ages in his autobiographical masterpiece *Libro de buen amor.* This collection of fables, stories, parodies, lyrics and profane poems is a delightful source of information for scholars interested in all phases of Medieval culture.

The list of French, German and English authors who have sought inspiration in the colorful and exotic Spanish *romances,* especially during the Romantic period, is seemingly endless. The most prominent imitators of this genre were Southey, Scott, Irving, Byron and Lockart. Indeed, the Spanish ballad has provided excellent material for those searching for fresh ideas from the Middle Ages. There are countless translations, collections and research articles in this field.

In a similar manner many novels concerning Spain's early history (notably Pérez de Hita's *Guerras civiles de Granada*) were popularized and imitated during the Romantic movement in nineteenth-century Europe. Chateaubriand and Washington Irving head an impressive list of foreign writers indebted to these semi-history, semi-novelesque works.

*Amadís de Gaula,* generally acclaimed as one of the most perfect novels of chivalry, is another of Spain's gifts to universal literature. A host of sequels and imitations appeared, both in and outside of Spain, after its publication in 1508.

Montemayor's pastoral novel, *La Diana,* the first to be written outside Italy and one of the finest of its type in world literature, exerted a notable influence on Hardy as well as many French literary figures. It is also generally conceded

to be the source of the plot for Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona.*

The dialogued novel *La Celestina,* the first Spanish book translated into English, has been established as an exceedingly important landmark in the development of European realism. In fact, it is reputed to be the work from which our modern novel of customs grew. The two young lovers in the work, Calisto and Melibea, have often been called the predecessors of Romeo and Juliet, and the unforgettable Celestina is known to everyone even remotely familiar with the literature of Europe. Those in English literature will recall the celebrated version of this masterpiece written by James Mabbe, *The Spanish Bawd.*

Half of the world's truly universal figures — Don Juan and Don Quijote — are of Spanish origin, and the former has the added distinction of being the most copied personage in all literatures. Byron, Molière, Corneille, Rostand, Mozart, George Bernard Shaw, Goldoni, Dumas *père* and Merimée are just a few of the multitude of foreign authors who have treated Tirso de Molina's creation.

No segment of Spanish literature affected the rest of European letters as did the colorful and dynamic theatre of the Golden Age. Led by the imaginative Lope de Vega and his successors (especially Tirso de Molina, Ruiz de Alarcón and Calderón), the Spanish gained an international reputation as the acknowledged masters of the stage.

The Swiss critic Sismundi, for example, points out that other nations for generations to come borrowed from Spain's theatre in an unscrupulous manner. Sometimes foreign dramatists were content to use their plots, but very often they made what amounted to free translations of Golden Age plays. Much of the production of Molière and Corneille is little more than reworkings of Lope de Vega, Ruiz de Alarcón, Moreto and Guillén de Castro.

It is noteworthy, also, that although Alexandre Dumas *fils* is generaly believed to be the creator of the thesis play, this genre was developed by Ruiz de Alarcón almost two centuries before the time of the Frenchman.

In Germany, even though there were many imitations

of Lope de Vega, the preference was for the theatre of Calderón, the stylist whose polished verse and innovations regarding stage technique were much more popular.

The picaresque novel, born in Spain and perfected by Alemán, Espinel, Quevedo and Guevara, had immeasurable influence upon European letters, especially in France, Germany, Italy and England. In fact, it was very instrumental in democratizing fictional literature throughout the world. Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* became a model for Grimmelshausen's *Simplicius Simpliccimus*, the outstanding seventeenth-century novel in Germany. The Frenchman Lesage imitated the works of both Espinel and Guevara, and the grotesque caricatures of the latter exerted a marked influence on Scarron and Smollett.

It is of interest to note in passing that Quevedo's renowned Domine Cabra is generally acknowledged as the prototype of Charles Dickens' Squeers.

Specialists in comparative literature have noted other traces of elements from Spain's picaresque novel in English letters, notably in the aforementioned Smollett and Sterne, as well as in various other writers up to the time of Dickens and Thackeray.

The incomparable Cervantes, creator of the world's first really modern novel, taught a great deal to foreign authors as well as to his fellow Spaniards. Among the most prominent of those in English literature who show evidence of the influence of the writer of *Don Quijote* are Sterne, Fielding and Dickens. One popular innovation which many adopted was the Cervantine device of intercalating short stories in a novel. Perhaps the two outstanding examples of this technique in our language are to be found in *Tom Jones* and *Pickwick Papers*.

In the realm of mystic literature Spain has produced four brilliant stars — Santa Teresa, San Juan de la Cruz, Fray Luis de León and Fray Luis de Granada — from a galaxy of nearly three thousand mystics and ascetics. Only the Germans, with Eckart, Suso, Tauler and Thomas à Kempis, have produced comparable literary works in this field. This insufficiently known phase of Spanish literature is charac-

terized by poetry and prose which reach great heights of lyrical exaltation and it is completely devoid of affectation and pedantry. Furthermore, some of the lofty verses of San Juan de la Cruz and Fray Luis de León are among the finest examples of Spanish lyric poetry.

Those familiar with the writings of both have noted that many observations which appear in Montaigne's essays were apparently appropriated from Guevara's earlier work, *Epistolas familiares.*

It is safe to say that only England of the European nations has been able to vie with Spain in the consistent development of first-rate lyric poets from the days of Gonzalo de Berceo (late twelfth century) to the present time. This tradition is emphasized more than ever when one scans the contemporary scene and encounters such creative lyrists as Federico García Lorca, Antonio Machado and Juan Ramon Jiménez, all of whom rank with the best Europe has produced in recent years.

Contrary to popular belief, Spain has given the world many extraordinary philosophers.

The brilliant and very original Luis Vives, who taught for a time at Oxford, contributed a considerable amount in the fields of pedagogy and sociology as well as in philosophy. In fact, he foreshadowed Descartes, Locke and Kant, and set the stage for Bacon's inductive method. Those who are thoroughly familiar with his works are convinced that he furnished many ideas which made others famous.

In somewhat the same way, but on a much more modest scale, Fray Benito Jerónimo Feijóo played the same role. This erudite priest built up a reputation throughout Europe for his ideas in the sciences, politics, literature and history as the anticipator of the French encyclopedists. However, he was the victim of two serious handicaps — he was too far ahead of his times, and he wore a Roman collar.

*El criticón,* the masterpiece of Baltasar Gracián, is considered to be perhaps the finest philosophical novel ever written in any language. Father Gracián exerted a great influence on both Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. In fact, the latter called *El criticón* one of the world's greatest books and re-

ferred to its author as his favorite philosopher.

Gracián's impact was notable in France, too. La Rochefaucauld and La Bruyère, for example, added to their fame by employing approximately three hundred maxims from the works of the Spanish philosopher. In addition, many scholars insist that they can trace more than a few of Rosseau's writings directly to Gracián.

Moving to the contemporary scene one encounters two other philosophers whose works have transcended international boundaries and placed their authors among the leading thinkers of the twentieth century.

Miguel de Unamuno has written several original and profound novels, essays and short stories which are destined to become lasting contributions to the intellectual life of his country.

Even more well known to Americans and to the world in general is Jose Ortega y Gasset whose provocative articles on science, culture, art and education are widely read and discussed. He is remembered in this country for his *Rebelión de las masas, Dehumanización del arte* and *Misión de la universidad* (the ideas of which Robert Hutchins imitated at the University of Chicago).

It is, indeed, ironic that although Blasco-Ibáñez (*Blood and Sand, The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse,* etc.), often referred to as the "Spanish Zola," is perhaps the best known novelist of modern Spain, few of those thoughly versed in the literature of that nation would dare call him their best.

On the other hand, those completely familiar with his novels concede that the prolific Pérez Galdós compares most favorably with the great masters of Realism—Balzac, Dickens, Tolstoy and Dostoevski.

Despite the prolonged conflict between liberalism and traditionalism which has predominated in the Iberian peninsula, there has been, since the renowned "Generation of '98," an abundance of first-rate literary production which has actually forced Hispanic letters into the foreground of European and even world literature.

In addition to the work alluded to in the fields of poetry and the essay, there has been a great revival of interest in

the novel and in the theatre.

Perhaps the most widely accepted novel in recent years is Gironella's forceful masterpiece, *Los cipreses creen en Dios*, a work which borders on epic proportions.

Another excellent novelist who has been the center of attraction throughout European literary circles is Camilo Cela. In fact, one of his novels, *La familia de Pascual Duarte*, has been imitated to such an extent that is has caused a new literatury departure, *tremendismo*, in the prose fiction narrative.

There are, of course, many more, including several fine female novelists led by the already established Carmen Laforet.

Equally impressive is the reputation of the contemporary theatre, which has produced such universally appreciated dramatists as García Lorca, Martinez-Sierra, Jacinto Grau and Alejandro Casona.

Similar strides have been made in erudition, the short story and other genres.

Then, too, one must not forget the bright, new and insufficiently known literary contributions of Latin America. Having broken away from European domination with the advent of such prominent writers as Heredia, Olmedo, Andrés Bello, Andrade and others, the Spanish-American continues to create his own unique literary universe, which is characterized by imagination, vitality and depth. Already Hispanic-American authors have made notable contributions to world literature in the areas of poetry, the essay and the novel of social protest.

But there is no need to belabor the issue with more names virtually unknown to the average American student, whether these writers be historians who satisfy our "rigid standards of modern research" or *vanguardia* poets. The point is simply this: the true worth of Hispanic letters has been downgraded, distorted and misrepresented because of the psychological and cultural isolation which has existed between ourselves and the Hispanic peoples.

Why has such a condition existed? The answer seems to be rather evident. In the first place, the hostility between the Protestant world and the nation which is so closely iden-

tified with the Catholic reaction is a universal fact.

Secondly, as the contemporary scholar Américo Castro emphasizes, there are historical reasons for our cultural detachment from Spain and Spanish America. The Spaniards have been, after all, the traditional enemies of the two nations — England and France — which were most instrumental in forging our cultural and political background. Anxious for the disintegration of the vast Spanish empire, the French and British, among others, seized upon the impassioned claims of the idealistic Father Las Casas' writings concerning the abuses and exploitation of the Indian in the Americas and the groundwork for the celebrated "Black Legend" was laid as a potent propaganda weapon. The fact that today we can look at both sides more objectively and study the problem in the light of our own treatment of the Indians is, of course, of no consequence.

Finally, we must realize that the possibility of subsequent cultural interchanges between ourselves and the Hispanic peoples was voided by our own geographical expansion which was, by and large, at the expense of the latter (Louisiana Territory, the cessions as the result of the Mexican War, the obtaining of Florida, and the losses to the Spanish people after the War of '98—Puerto Rico, Cuba, the Philippines, etc., as well as our acquisition of the Panama Canal zone).

Now it should be quite clear that this article was not intended to justify Spanish literary achievements. That is not necessary. If that were the case, many more than these few salient references would have been mentioned. Nor is it an endeavor to exaggerate its value, as did one prominent critic of European literature when he referred to a French intellectual as a Spaniard with money. It is merely a plea to have it placed in its proper perspective.

Little by little, Hispanic studies have been overcoming the forenamed obstacles, especially in university circles throughout the Middle West. The sincere hispanist beseeches those still unfamiliar with this literature to draw back the invisible curtain, created by tradition (often offered as an excuse for not thinking) and amounting to a kind of organized ignorance, far enough to reappraise the field.

# A Plea

Please God, if such there be, unmask contingency.
Full-read am I and trained to do. What?
Yet not what but why.
What am I and where and why?
Damn Scholastic sword of logic buffeting
straw men. Damn ineluctible flux.
May Heraclitus wallow in his change
and Plato perish in duplicity.

Send me not to books or men
whose many faceted learning grovels
in rhetoric and deludes with hollow words.
Cogito ergo *sum*, or *cogito, ergo cogito sum*?
Can ten thousand categories tell me
who I am or why? Poor Augustine.
Will the meaning of the Word or of the
Light yet tell you of Augustine?

Send me then ill-ready to the law?
You mock me and abdicate duty.
Seek we justice under law or law
under justice? Who are we?
Let innumerable students know Holmes,
Yet not one student knows himself.
Eight million words digested and absorbed,
Eight million meanings flee ingestion.

## A Plea

Perhaps all a fortuitous happenstance?
No answer to a questing mind.
(And all minds quest, yet if there
be no answer all is derision and chaos
and he who preaches chance
has less than a doctrine and less than a pupil,
seeking nothing with nothing.)

Perhaps an Evil Genius to create and
win and in the winning triumph?
(Yet no victory without opponent, thus
I must still concede Benevolence.
Well might I betray It, thus indulge
the Genius. Still, betrayal presupposes
betrayed and I must choose. Does not
choice predicate a better or a Best?)

Perhaps a God as antiquity teaches?
Perhaps a gospel of obedience and salvation?
Perhaps no logic beyond that of necessity?
Should I resign my mind, should I yield
my will to Thine and thus be saved?
Who am I and why?

In all Your creation Lord, there must
be truth however cryptic. Grant
that I may attain to my capacity.
Show me that which I may see, give
me to see more and preserve me
from false teaching however seductive.
Grant me rest in You
And in You to know myself.

*— Daniel Carney*

# The Bamboo Tree

See! How high the bamboo tree!
Straight-stalked, stern-stemmed grass
Stabbing high, higher still
Through rough ripples of field
Piercing proud, puffed clouds that pass
Overhead and cannot see down.
But hard, strong-stocked bamboo
Man-weed height it does easily surpass;
Yet roots firm in humble ground
To feeblest breezes that sough,
To some sensitive touch of some native lass,
Bamboo, as if by virtue,
Very graciously bows low
For so high does it grow.

— *Anthony Prosen, S. J.*

# Memories Dead

His memories in my life cling
Like dead leaves to trees in spring,
And like the leaves they fall when torn
By strong winds that rush and mourn.

The memories fall into a millrace,
But end in a pool, a quiet place.
The pool then lost to the half-searching eye,
The memories never to espy.

— *Phillip Iannarelli*

# A Bowl of Soup

by Ernest Fontana

## I

WE WALKED north on Bolivar Street past the dim coffee houses where the Greeks sat bent over card games. We were headed for the Avalon Ball Room, and the January wind bit into our cheeks.

"Damn economics prof messed me up this quarter, gave all essay tests." I couldn't sympathize with Norman; I had never taken economics.

A stooped man stepped from a doorway ahead and stood facing us. As we neared him I could see his unshaven and reddened face in the streetlight. He wore a shabby, brown overcoat and a blue stocking cap. He then pulled one trembling hand out of his coat pocket and shoved it open before me.

"A quarter for a bowl of soup, please, mister."

I had stopped walking and looked into his eyes, which were crossed by a maze of fine veins. His mouth was open, and his breath, heavy with the odor of cheap wine, steamed in my face. I reached into my pocket and grappled for the quarter that rested there between two dimes.

Norman, who had walked on, said, "Don't be a fool; he'll just go and spend it on booze."

The beggar mumbled something at my friend and looked at me pleadingly.

"Come on. Forget the tramp. I'm freezing."

I began to walk away, and the beggar followed me a few steps with his outstretched hand. I quickened my pace and left him behind. After covering a block, I looked back and

the beggar was still standing there, his hands buried in his pockets.

Norman said, "You shouldn't fall for their hard luck stories. Those kind can always go to the Salvation Army if they don't want to work."

In the distance I could see the entrance of the ball room marked by a gaudy marquee. I looked at Norman, and his olive hued face shone with excitement.

## II

As we stood in the lobby of the Avalon Ball Room, waiting to check our coats, we searched among the dancers. Norman nudged me.

"See that girl in the maroon sweater?"

"You mean the hefty one scratching her ear?"

"No. The one to the right of the stage. I used to date her. She's well stacked and a lot of fun. But she started getting serious."

All the girls Norman takes out eventually begin to get serious.

We checked our coats, and I gave the woman the quarter that would have been the beggar's. Norman then went over to the girl in the maroon sweater.

I stood amid the reedy music, the subtle glances, and the awkward collisions of dance couples. I noticed the usual fat girl, sitting alone, abandoned by her friends to her melancholy thoughts. She would sit there all night.

I approached a tall blonde standing among a group of girls who were trying hard to appear as if they were enjoying themselves. I felt that momentary suspense, that flash of doubt, and then, "Would you like to dance?"

"Alright," and a wave of hair fell across her eyes as she turned to me.

We moved onto the floor. The band was playing one of those oversweet, popular ballads. I drew her to me and felt her closeness and her moist, warm hands. I asked her her

name; it was Miriam and she went to the Art Institute. I told her mine was Ben, and I noticed that she was taller than I in her high heels. After that we remained silent the rest of the dance. It ended, and I hoped they wouldn't play a cha cha. I welcomed another mawkish ballad and again held her closer.

"Do you have a ride home tonight?"

"No."

I hesitated to offer her one, for she might be insulted. But then I said, "I'll be glad to take you there."

"Fine," she answered.

I pressed her cheek against mine, feeling a wisp of her soft hair, and wished it was closer to midnight when the dance would break up.

We sat out a cha cha, and she told me she was from Toledo and was boarding with two other girls. As we sat, she pressed closer.

I left her unwillingly to tell Norman my plans for the night. He wasn't with the girl in the maroon sweater, nor anywhere on the floor. I went downstairs to the bar. Couples sat sipping beer and laughing intimately. There were no lone fat girls here and neither was Norman.

When I returned to the dance floor, the band had taken up a polka. The feverish dancers circled around the hall, some jostling against me. I went into the lobby. The crowd was still coming in, and as they opened the door they let in the noises of the January night: the horn blasts, the wailing gusts, and the sudden shriek of brakes. I lit a cigarette and watched the newcomers check their coats. When the polka ended I turned to rejoin Miriam.

She was dancing with Norman. He held her close, as I had done, and was whispering to her. Waves of her blond hair had fallen across her eye. I went to the other side of the dance floor, for I didn't want to be seen by them.

A buxom girl, wearing a snug fitting black sweater, was sitting beneath a mirror. As I moved toward her I could see my image emerging from the crowd; I felt no suspense this time.

We danced, and I sensed her garish makeup, which had

begun to streak. She spoke in an artificial manner, slurring each syllable. This she must have imagined to be alluring.

"So your name's Ben? Mine's Susan Gosanavich. You know you have nice eyes? Wild. I work at the Union Loan Company, the downtown office. My brother, Harry, he's at Fort Ord in Colorado, learning to be a ski-trooper. Do you ski?"

My right hand could feel, through her rough woolen sweater, the flabbiness of her back.

The band took an intermission, and I stood dumbly listening to the voice of a would-be siren. Then Norman came over and signalled with a sly movement of his eyes and a frown that he wanted to talk with me privately. I told Susan I would be back in a minute.

"Listen, Ben, I met this girl from art school. We're leaving now with a friend of her friend."

"Did you know her?"

'No, we met ten minutes ago. While we were dancing I handed her my usual line. It worked like a charm."

Norman looked at Susan Gosanavich who had seated herself back under the mirror. "I see you've been busy, too. Well, I'll give you a ring tomorrow. So long, Ben."

His stocky figure hastily maneuvered through the crowd. Those in his way he would gently grab and swing himself around.

I returned to Susan. She perceived my boredom and started to talk foolishly. I felt smothered by her slurred syllables and the whirling dancers. She gave me her phone number. I told her I would call her next week. I knew she didn't believe this.

I stayed at the Avalon until the next intermission. Then some famous singer came out, and all the dancers gathered around the stage to hear him.

The woman who checked coats had difficulty finding mine; I had lost my ticket. She said she needed help on Friday nights, it got too busy for her, and she asked me why I was leaving so early. I thought of Miriam and the blond hair falling over her eyes.

## III

When I stepped outside the snow was drifting across the glittering signs of the many bars strewn around the dance hall. My bare hands burned in their pockets, and I wished I had worn gloves.

Bolivar Street gradually emptied of people as I moved south. I reached the Greek coffee houses. All of them had closed but one. I looked in and saw the calendars with their pictures of nude women, the photograph of the Acropolis, and the coffee being roasted on hot coals. This would have been enough to lure me in from the blistering night, had it not been for the late hour and the four grim Greeks, the only patrons of the place, who sat over their cards.

The beggar I had met before stood on the sidewalk facing me. His blue stocking hat had been forced down further over his ears, and his eyes were hidden as he squinted into the wind.

"Quarter, please, for a cup of soup."

I dug into my pocket. The quarter was gone but the two dimes were still there. I laid them in his palm.

"Friend, how about a nickel more?"

I remained silent.

"Well, thanks, anyhow; it's better than nothing."

He disappeared into a gloomy doorway, and I wondered where he would find soup so late at night.

# Esau

by D. M. Ross

ESAU HAD quarreled with his wife Judith all morning. The evening before, he had come home drunk and handled her roughly. She had cried herself to sleep beside him, his massive right arm keeping her from leaving his bed. At dawn he arose, his stomach sick from the wine, his chest swollen from the scratch of her finger nails. His nausea soon subsided, and he began to feel ashamed and contrite. But Judith began to complain as soon as she awakened, saying that he never abused his second wife, Basemath, as he did her.

Finally, he hit her; it was a stinging slap across the jaw that made her drop his bowl of morning meal and sent her crawling into the far corner of the tent. There she whined in a shrill voice. Basemath rushed to console him; but he pushed her away, his body shuddering with rage. At that moment he noticed that a figure was blocking off the morning light entering through the tent flap. Esau turned to see his mother.

Rebecca, short, plump, stood with her stubby fingers on her hips. Her hard black eyes moved from Esau to the whimpering woman in the corner and he saw the ends of her mouth turn down. She had not approved of her son's marriages with these foreign women and Esau knew it was with considerable satisfaction that she saw that the union was incompatible.

Esau's eyes were on the ground; his hand moved self-consciously over the large red welt on his chest. Rebecca made a noise with her tongue as if she were sucking a morsel of food from a hollow tooth.

"Your father wants to speak with you," she said in a

monotone, and then she moved away from the tent opening.

Judith raised her head.

"It's a blessing, Esau," Basemath breathed excitedly.

Esau did not hear her; his eyes blinked to keep back tears. Of course, his parents had been right: neither of these foreign wives were suited to him. They were sensitive and easily upset; and they were in no way sympathetic to the traditions of his people. One of his own tribe would respect the first born son of the patriarch Isaac; they would permit him to get drunk and handle them roughly on occasion. His dissatisfaction had been predicted by both Isaac and Rebecca; but before this morning, neither parent had ever witnessed the dissension which flared up so often in his tent.

Esau turned and walked over to the wash basin, stooping to rinse his face.

"He is going to give you the blessing," Basemath repeated, her voice musical with expectation.

"Isaac is not going to die," Esau spoke into the bowl.

"He has been dying for ten years," Judith said bitterly.

Esau lifted his head and glared at his wife, and she buried her head in the folds of her dress. But his eyes softened as he gave himself up to self-pity, thinking of how a woman of his own people would have more respect for the patriarch. He placed a cloth over his head and strode out of the tent, leaving his wives to wait and wonder. This was his favorite means of disciplining them; a beating only deepened their resentment. But to leave them suddenly and mysteriously on some important task excited their inquisitiveness. He was certain that when he returned they would welcome him.

The late morning air was clear and cool. He faced perhaps a five minute walk, for the tents of Isaac and Rebecca were apart from the rest. Esau passed a woman drawing water from the well. When she saw him, she smiled pleasantly and gave the slightest bow.

"Good morning, Esau."

Esau nodded to the woman and after he had gone a few steps and was sure that the woman had returned to her work, he swelled his hairy chest until the deep scratch stung.

Esau, son of Isaac the patriarch, and the first in line to succeed his father, commanded respect from his people. He was the most skilled hunter in the tribe; he was the fastest runner, the best wrestler, and the hardest drinker. His size put him a full head taller than any man he had ever seen, and his word was the equivalent of a divinely witnessed vow.

Esau approached the tent of his father quietly. He saw his mother working a short distance behind it and he was glad that she didn't see him. He put his face up to a small opening in the flap and spoke,

"Father?"

He heard his father's voice:

"Come in, Esau."

Esau slipped back the flap and peered in. The interior of the tent was chill, and the air was filled with the sweetness of medicinal herbs and dying flesh. Isaac sat propped up on skins. His head, small, shrunken, was yellow and his skin was lined with crevices so deep that they now seemed filled with the brown grime of the desert. His dead eyes stared upward into the shadows at the top of the tent.

Esau knelt before his father, and Isaac reached out and ran his hand over the back of his son's neck and down onto his throat.

"What do you wish of me, father?" Esau asked softly.

Isaac grimaced; his stomach would not even accept goat's milk now.

"I am near death, Esau," he said, pushing his thumb into the cleft of his son's chin. "So that the tradition may be fulfilled, I want you to go out . . ."

Esau turned his face away; Isaac returned it with his hand. He continued, ". . . I want you to go out into the fields and capture some game and prepare me a meal. And, after this proof of your respect, I will give you the blessing which is your due."

Isaac released Esau's chin and it fell down on his chest.

"And what will I do when you are dead, Father?" Esau mumbled.

Isaac snapped back his head and spoke in a sharp voice.

"You will minister to these people; you will lead them

to fertile land when the earth has been exhausted, and you will settle their disputes, and appoint their priests, and once a year you will enter the holy place with the priests."

He continued in a softer voice.

"Do you remember when you were a boy, and you wanted me to go hunting with you? I could not go, for I had business with the tribe. I told you that you would be patriarch some day and would have to spend much time with tribal affairs. You replied that you would not want to be patriarch if this prohibited your hunting. Now you must go and hunt, for it is time you receive the blessing."

Isaac placed his folded hands upon his lap and Esau stood up.

"I do as you wish," the son said.

He paused at the tent opening and turned and looked at the old man. Isaac sensed that his son had not left, and his throat was suddenly closed with emotion.

"I am an old man, Esau," he said with difficulty. "My death is to be expected. Do not be sad."

Esau left his father's tent and hurried down the incline on which it sat. As he walked, his sorrow began to be replaced by an unmistakable feeling of fear. This was not the first time he had experienced it, but previously he had been able to suppress it: now it was more persistent. Though he never completely admitted it to himself, the responsibilities of the patriarch's role made him uneasy. He was not used to making decisions affecting the lives of hundreds of people; decisions which, in many cases were concerned with life and death. He avoided decisions in his private life, and he recalled now that the only real decision he had to make — that to marry Judith and Basemath — had been a bad one. His mind began to spin.

"No," he said aloud, "I'm the first-born, and the birthright is my due."

He had arived at his tent. He entered and quickly changed into his hunting garments. The hunt could not be too difficult, for a large buck had been in the area for a week looking for food. Esau had tracked it and observed its habits, but there had been no necessity to kill it, for they had more than

enough meat at this time.

Esau snatched up his spear and began to sharpen the point on a chip of stone. He turned to see Judith standing in the doorway of the tent. Her eyes were on his spear; she knew what he was about to do.

"Do you want me to harness the dogs?" she asked.

Esau turned. "No," he replied, "I want to hunt and kill the deer myself."

"Then you won't take your brother, Jacob, along," she said, her face completely expressionless.

Esau did not look up; he knew that to which she was referring. It was a hunt which had occurred many years before, a hunt with his brother, Jacob.

Jacob and Esau were completely different people. Most of Jacob's actions were a mystery to Esau. His brother's mind was quick and logical, and, like his mother, he possessed a dry wit which baffled and confused Esau. Jacob made great sport of his brother's clumsiness, and many times Esau discovered him and their mother smirking at him.

Isaac, his father, was more sympathetic, for he and Esau had enjoyed hunting and fishing together. But Isaac too, had, on occasion, become impatient with his son's slow wit, and Esau could detect condescension in his father's voice as he tried to teach him the matters of legislation and the dispensing of justice.

It was Isaac who had insisted that Jacob accompany Esau on one of his frequent hunts. Isaac, a lover of the forest and field, could not understand why his second-born did not share this interest.

However, as Esau had expected, Jacob wanted to do nothing more than remain in camp within the protection of the tent, and Esau taunted his brother mercilessly for his lack of manliness. Esau finally went out to hunt alone; and soon discovered that they had selected a bad site. For two days he wandered without sighting game, and, at the end of the second day without substantial food, his strength began to desert him. He stumbled back to the camp and collapsed a few yards from the campfire. He did not know for how long he was unconscious, but when he came to, he saw that his

brother was sitting before the fire watching him. Esau called to Jacob for help.

"What's the matter?" Jacob asked without moving.

"I'm starving. I've gone for two days . . ."

There was a pause. Esau crawled closer to the fire.

Jacob said softly, "How hungry are you?"

Esau stopped and stared at his brother's face. Its color changed from red to yellow in the light of the fire. Jacob's eyes were small and hard.

"Are you hungry enough to exchange your birth-right for some food?"

Esau let his head drop to the ground. He had never seen so much desire in one face.

"Are you," Jacob insisted, bending over the fire.

"Jacob . . . don't."

"Answer me."

"Yes, yes, I am," Esau cried angrily, and his brother rushed to him and helped him into the tent.

Esau had recalled this occurrence many times over the years, but he had related it to only one person: his wife Judith; and he never stopped regretting this, for she referred to his foolishness often during their quarrels. Her scorn increased his shame and sense of unworthiness.

He had finished sharpening his spear and now he left without a word to his wife. As she watched him hurry down the path that led into the wood, her heart was filled with a mixture of sorrow and pity. Then she saw Jacob, dressed in the skins of a hunter, approach his father's tent.

Esau knew that there was little time to waste, for the sun had already completed half of its journey and it was at this time that the buck regularly descended to the shade of the spring for a drink.

Experience had taught Esau to travel through a forest noiselessly and quickly, and within a few minutes he was concealed in a thicket beside the spring; one step to his left was a small clearing.

For an anxious moment it seemed as if the buck would not appear, but then Esau sighted him, a muscular, scarred creature with antlers ragged from innumerable contests. It

approached cautiously, and paused at the edge of the stream. The ugly head swung around and stopped at the thicket. Esau was certain that the animal saw him, but then it blinked and dropped its head to drink. The man stepped into the clearing and allowed a twig to break beneath his foot. As the animal looked up, in the second before it bolted, Esau split its skull in two with his spear.

He hurried back to his parent's tent, dragging the beast behind him. As he entered the main dwelling, his brother Jacob looked up from the corner, his face pale. He was wearing one of Esau's hunting garments.

"Help me prepare the food," Esau panted.

Jacob stood up suddenly and rushed from the tent, but Esau did not notice, for he had already begun to strip the hide from the animal and remove pieces of meat from its flanks. He prepared a fire, cooked the strips of meat, and hurried to his father's tent.

"Father?" he said outside the tent opening.

"Yes."

Esau entered.

"It is I, Esau," he said quietly. "I have brought food for you that you may give me the blessing."

Isaac's mouth dropped open, but there was no sound. The lids shut slightly over his lifeless eyes.

"You were just here bearing game; I gave you . . ." His voice faltered. Esau dropped his plate of food and fell to his knees.

"It was Jacob"; Esau cried up into the anguished face, "he has stolen my birthright and my blessing. Bless me too, Father."

Isaac's chin dropped to his chest. He turned up his palms in helplessness.

"No," he said, "it is done. The blessing has been bestowed; it is irretrievable. You are now your brother's servant, for he is to be patriarch."

"Don't desert me," Esau cried.

Isaac reached out his hand, but he could not find his son, nor did Esau choose to move to him.

"I have not deserted you," the old man returned in a

voice as highly pitched as his son's. Then he sighed heavily and his outstretched arm fell.

"Not you," he said more softly. "It is done. Not even God can change it."

"I will change it," Esau snapped. "I will kill him,"

"Would you profane my death by killing your brother?" Isaac asked miserably.

Esau rose and walked away from his father.

"It is finished, Esau," the old man said, "we must accept it."

Esau spun, his face red; but he left his father silently and rushed back to his tent and fell on the floor. He began to cry in helpless anger and disappointment. At this moment he knew of no justice or compassion in the world.

From the corner of the tent, Judith saw her husband lying there and she lit a candle and knelt before him. She reached out and touched his ear, and to her surprise he did not move away.

"Perhaps it is better this way," she said so softly that the candle flame hardly flickered.

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